

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A method of enhancing at least one performance property of an aqueous polymer dispersion comprising at least one water-soluble ionic compound, which comprises

removing at least 50 mol% of the at least one water-soluble ionic compound from the polymer dispersion, and then

adding at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the aqueous polymer dispersion is obtained by emulsion polymerization.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the dispersed polymer in the polymer dispersion is a polymer obtained by free-radical addition polymerization which is synthesized from at least 60% by weight of at least one principal monomer selected from the group consisting of C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>20</sub> alkyl (meth)acrylates, vinyl esters of carboxylic acids comprising up to 20 carbon atoms, vinylaromatics comprising up to 20 carbon atoms, ethylenically unsaturated nitriles, vinyl halides, vinyl ethers of alcohols comprising 1 to 10 carbon atoms, aliphatic hydrocarbons comprising 2 to 8 carbon atoms and one or two double bonds, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one water-soluble ionic compound is an ionic emulsifier.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein at least 90 mol% of the at least one water-soluble ionic compound is removed.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by treating the dispersion with an ion exchanger resin, by diafiltration or by dialysis.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is a dialkyl ester.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is a dialkyl ester of sulfonated succinic acid.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is added in an amount of from 0.01 to 5 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the dispersed polymer.

Claims 10-20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by treating the dispersion with an ion exchanger resin.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by diafiltration.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by dialysis.

Claims 24-25 (Canceled).